



## Occupational Licensing Board Review Testimony Ohio Home Inspector Board

### House State & Local Government Committee October 9, 2019

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Anne Petit and I am the Superintendent of the Division of Real Estate & Professional Licensing at the Ohio Department of Commerce. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on the Ohio Home Inspector Board.

The Ohio Home Inspector Board ("Board") was created through the recent enactment of Senate Bill 255 of the 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly. The Board is responsible for regulating the licensure and performance of home inspectors in Ohio, while Home Inspector Law is administered by the Division of Real Estate & Professional Licensing ("Division"). Our primary goal is to give potential homebuyers, making arguably the biggest purchase of their lives, confidence that any inspector they plan to hire is knowledgeable, properly trained and adheres to a standard of practice and ethics that is in the public interest.

While awaiting the Home Inspector Program's ("Program") November 1<sup>st</sup> effective date, the seven-member board has worked diligently to adopt rules regarding requirements for obtaining and maintaining a license; standards of practice and ethical conduct in performing inspections, including identification and avoidance of conflicts of interest; fees for licensure and education course providers; setting a special assessment amount in order to fund the Home Inspection Recovery Fund; approval of experience curriculum for pre-licensure; and licensure of non-resident home inspectors.

In addition to drafting the program rules, the Division has worked to create forms, implement necessary IT solutions, and begin receiving and processing "grandfather" applications. To date, the Division has already received over 600 "grandfather" applications and we expect between 800-900 licensees total. Currently, the processing of "grandfather" applications and other functions of the Program are being supported by staff of other programs within the Division. Once the program is operational, the Division expects to have four full-time employees fulfilling these needs.

Of the 33 states that regulate home inspectors, the licensing requirements in Ohio are substantially similar to the other states. And, although there are no national uniform licensure requirements for home inspectors, the Board did incorporate a majority of components into the Standards of Practice rule from the two professional member organizations' standards, both of which have been in existence for decades and are commonly accepted nationwide.

If an individual wishes to be a licensed home inspector in Ohio, they must comply with the following requirements: completion of an application form, proof of minimum competency,

completion of a criminal history check, have complied with O.R.C. 4764 and rules promulgated thereunder, and remittance of an application fee. So long as the applicant meets or exceeds these statutory criteria, they will be issued a license allowing them to serve Ohio's home buying and selling public. There are licensure exemptions for individuals operating within the scope of another professional license. Those individuals include certified building code personnel, certified architects, registered professional engineers, individuals licensed as a specialty contractor with the Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board, licensed real estate appraisers, licensed commercial applicators of pesticide, public insurance adjusters holding a valid certificate of authority, and licensed real estate brokers, real estate salespersons, foreign real estate dealers, and foreign real estate salespersons.

In summary, I ask you to please support the continued occupational licensure under the Ohio Home Inspector Board. While the Board is still in the process of implementing the Home Inspector Program, we have worked to carefully craft rules that strike the appropriate balance to ensure competition within the industry and increase economic opportunities amongst its members while still protecting consumers in all aspects of the home buying and selling transaction.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present information on this board, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.